

Press Release

HARFORD COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Department of Community Service



PUBLIC SAFETY

"Ensuring a Safe
Harford"

EDUCATION

"Preparing Now,
Building for the Future"

EFFICIENCY IN GOVERNMENT

"Governing Smarter"

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

"Growing and Sustaining
Harford's Prosperity"

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

"Protecting Our
Environment"

QUALITY LIVING

"Safeguarding What is
Important to Harford
County Citizens"

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Annual Homeless Count to Take Place in Harford County

Dept. of Community Services & Partners Work to Eradicate Homelessness

(Bel Air, MD) - - Local homeless service providers, community volunteers, law enforcement agencies, and Harford County Government will come together on Wednesday, January 29, 2014 to hold a one-day count of homeless people in Harford County.

Like nearly all communities, Harford County has citizens who are living in places not meant for human habitation, outside and unsheltered, or who are relying daily on some form of emergency housing. Conducting a count of the homeless in the community will not only help determine how many are homeless, but it will also help us to understand the underlying issues that have contributed to the person becoming homeless. Collecting good data, characteristics, and service needs of the homeless in the community will allow local human service providers to get the necessary information to effectively plan programs to eradicate homelessness in Harford County.

Physical and mental health treatment, addictions services, employment readiness training, job placement, credit repair and life skills training are among some of the services a homeless person or family will need as they work toward self-sufficiency. Evaluating data that is collected during this point-in-time count will help identify where gaps in services may exist in order to work toward filling those gaps.

Citizens that would like to donate blankets, hats, gloves, water bottles, personal care items, or who want to help pack bag lunches for the homeless should contact the Harford Roundtable Homeless Count sub-committee at 410-638-3389 between the hours of 8:00am and 5:00pm, Monday through Friday.

(more)

Each year, the Harford County Department of Community Services works with community and faith-based agencies to help families avoid homelessness. The department works with partners to make sure funding can be accessed at various locations throughout the County when tough times happen to families. Partnerships allow homeless people and families to develop life skills, access employment opportunities, and achieve self-sufficiency by obtaining safe and affordable housing. The Department also helps divert individuals with mental health issues away from the criminal justice system and into treatment, which reduces recidivism and increases stability.

Harford County currently has 13 emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive shelters, offering a total of 290 year round beds for homeless adults, children and families. In Fiscal Year 2013, 830 people were provided with 39,262 emergency shelter and transitional housing bed nights for an average stay of 21 nights per person.

In 2013, the Harford County Department of Community Services provided more than \$1 million in homeless program funding, which assisted such organizations as Alliance, Inc., Faith Communities and Civic Agencies United, Inc. (FCCAUI), Associated Catholic Charities Inc./Anna's House, the Sexual Assault/Spouse Abuse Resource Center (SARC), Homecoming Project, Inc. and Harford Family House, Inc.

Other agencies within the community that support low-income residents include the Harford Community Action Agency (HCAA), Inner-County Outreach, Inc., Mason-Dixon Community Services, Tabitha's House, St. Joan of Arc, St. Frances de Sales, the Salvation Army of Harford County, and many other civic agencies and churches. This group covers a wide array of essential services such as food banks, soup kitchens, eviction prevention, rental support, clothing closets and furniture/household materials, school, infant supplies, utility assistance and job training.

To learn more about homeless services in Harford County, visit www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/homeless, or call the Department of Community Services at 410-638-3389.

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"Preserving Harford's past. Promoting Harford's future."